

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the application in light of the Office Action dated September 22, 2009. Claims 1-19, 21-25, and 27-29 are pending in the application. Claims 1-18 are withdrawn from consideration, claim 19 was amended and claim 23 was cancelled. The amendments to the claims has only been done to expedite the prosecution.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejects Claims 19, 22-24, and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,782,096 issued to Banquy (hereinafter “*Banquy '096*”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,496,859 issued to Fong et al. (hereinafter “*Fong*”), U.S. Patent No. 4,888,130 issued to Banquy (hereinafter “*Banquy '130*”), Davis et al., “Cryogenics for Syngas Processing,” *Chemical Engineering Progress*” (hereinafter “*Davis*”), and U.S. Patent No. 6,073,461 issued to McNeil et al. (hereinafter “*McNeil*”). In addition, the Examiner rejects Claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Banquy '096* in view of *Fong*, *Banquy '130*, *Davis*, and *McNeil*, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,044,063 issued to Ireland et al. (hereinafter “*Ireland*”). The Examiner further rejects Claim 25 under §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Banquy '096*, *Fong*, *Banquy '130*, *Davis*, *McNeil*, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,650,814 issued to Keller (hereinafter “*Keller*”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the comments set forth below.

Amended independent claim 19 recites, “a conduit for feeding separated-carbon monoxide product from said cryogenic distillation column to said syngas conversion system to remove Argon in a region above a bottom of the cryogen distillation column.” In contrast, the cited combination merely teaches that Argon mixed with methane is removed from the bottom of the methane separation fraction column. For example, *McNeil* discloses the stream 32 at the bottom of the methane separation fraction column to remove Argon mixed with methane. Col. 5, lines 10-13. If the methane is recycled to the syngas generation system, then Argon can build up in the system to an unacceptable level. The conduit can, in some implementations, substantially remove Argon from a region above the bottom of the column as a separate stream to prevent

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unacceptable levels of Argon in the syngas system. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of independent claim 19 and its respective dependents.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all Claims.

If the present application is not allowed and/or if one or more of the rejections is maintained, Applicants hereby request a telephone conference with the Examiner and further request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney to schedule the telephone conference.

No fees are believed to be due. However, please apply any deficiencies or any other required fees or any credits to deposit account 06-1050, referencing the attorney docket number shown above.

Respectfully submitted,

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